

SafeHouse Center Philosophy Statement

We believe that SafeHouse Center (SHC) services should be:

- Survivor centered, non-directive and non-judgmental
 - We recognize that she is the expert on her own life. We respond to her needs and priorities, do not tell her what to do or what to be concerned about, and do not state or imply any value judgment about her choices.
- Culturally competent
 - We recognize that all survivors come from a particular culture and see each survivor as unique. Staff seek to be aware of their own cultures and of whatever privilege and oppression they experience. Staff make every effort to provide services in a way that is free from prejudice and discrimination.
- Flexible, and as open-ended as possible
 - Although some services include time limits and rules (which vary as to 'strictness'), SHC takes each survivor's particular needs and circumstances into consideration and structures services around her. Rules and limits will only be set when clearly necessary and exceptions will be made when appropriate.
- Confidential and private
 - All services fully follow our confidentiality policy and staff do whatever possible to protect a survivor's confidentiality. Staff also protect a survivor's privacy and limit other staff's access to information to a 'need to know' basis.

Free to survivors,

Accountable to survivors, the organization and funders,

Clearly documented,

Well coordinated across the organization, and

Available when needed.

Lastly, there has been some discussion in the movement about whether or not it is 'better' for staff of domestic violence and sexual assault programs to be survivors themselves. While people who have personally experienced domestic violence and sexual assault can bring important insight and empathy to their work, it is also a priority to employ staff and volunteers who are personally insightful and empathic, regardless of their survivor status.

SHC believes that both survivors and non-survivors can provide excellent services to survivors.

We strive to be a place where all advocates are supported in their skill-building and their development of self-awareness, so that we each can do our best possible work. We also strive to be a place where staff who are survivors feel supported as survivors and can bring that aspect of ourselves to our work.